

## **TOWN/UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, October 9, 2007  
Audrey Beck Municipal Building  
Council Chambers  
4:00 pm**

### **Minutes**

**Present:** P. Barry, T. Callahan, B. Clouette, M. Hart, J. Hintz, A.J. Pappanikou, E. Paterson, W. Simpson, G. Zimmer

**Staff:** M. Capriola, G. Padick, C. van Zelm

- 1. Opportunity for Public to Address the Committee**  
None.

- 2. August 14, 2007 Meeting Minutes**  
The minutes of September 11, 2007 were passed unanimously.

- 3. Community-Campus Relations**

Jim Hintz provided an update on off-campus housing outreach efforts. In late August, Town, University and State staff conducted off-campus outreach visits and provided informational materials to students. 435 rental units were visited and direct contact was made with 800-1,000 students; if students shared information with their roommates, 2,000-2,500 students received information. Students asked questions about ordinances, etc. Mr. Clouette stated that in future years he would like to see positive, welcoming materials about the Town distributed - such as information on trails and parks in the community. Mr. Pappanikou asked Mr. Hintz about the condition of the rental properties that were visited. Mr. Hintz stated that, based upon information provided to him by Ms. Bell-Elkins, the properties appeared to be cleaner than in recent years. Celeron Square Apartments had signage posted regarding trash and litter.

Mr. Barry asked if the rental properties are being inspected for safety. Mr. Hart stated that at least 600 units have been inspected. Approximately 25% of the inspected units received warnings; almost all deficiencies were remedied. Only a dozen or so properties had citations issued for not correcting noted deficiencies. Landlord registration is at 100% compliance. Mayor Paterson stated that Mike Nintean, Director of Building and Housing Inspection has broken the Town into regions. Every afternoon one Building/Housing staff member patrols a region for litter (violations). Mr. Clouette mentioned the phenomenon of parents purchasing houses for their student-children to live in while attending UCONN; often a child will invite friends to live with them in the off campus housing. Mr. Clouette asked how

the housing code applies to these parent-owned, student occupied units. Mayor Paterson stated that pursuant to the Housing Code, a house can not have more than four unrelated persons residing in it.

Mr. Simpson talked about the excess of apartment rentals at UMASS because the student population never grew as projected; as a result many rental units were in a rundown condition. Mr. Clouette stated that he would not want that to occur in Mansfield. Mayor Paterson discussed the best practices report (approaches other communities/universities have used) and stated that it will be distributed. She further stated that there are many apartment complexes in Mansfield and only two have tended to be problematic. In her opinion, when a property company has good on-site management, it helps to reduce problems.

Mr. Clouette inquired about student reaction to steps taken by the property managers at Carriage House in response to the recommendations suggested by the Town. Mr. Hart stated that Aspen Square (property managers) issued letters to residents and that he and Mayor Paterson had dialogue with the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) on this issue. Mayor Paterson stated that while engaging in dialogue with USG, she noted that elected Town officials have a duty to uphold the laws – including enforcement of underage drinking. Mr. Hart commented that some citizens are concerned that by minimizing the activity at Carriage House, parties may spring up elsewhere throughout the community.

#### **4. Community Water and Wastewater Issues**

Mr. Barry asked if the University did not draw water from the Fenton during June through August – and used the Willimantic River instead – could the water system survive? Mr. Callahan said yes, but it is not a good idea. The Fenton study is linked to stream flow (dry v. wet season); redundancy in the water system is important to ensuring adequacy of supply. Mr. Barry stated that UCONN has not pumped water from the Fenton since July 26<sup>th</sup> and that the Fenton's dry condition is not the University's fault. However, he believes that many people in the community do not understand that point. Mr. Hart stated that water withdrawal is determined by scientific data such as stream flow measurement. Mr. Padick concurred and further discussed this point. Mr. Padick stated that a similar study is anticipated for the Willimantic River.

Mr. Callahan stated that water consumption was down 11% in August and 7% in September. Mayor Paterson noted that all Town toilets are being replaced with low flow toilets to aide in water conservation. Mr. Callahan discussed drought conditions and mandatory conservation measures. Mr. Callahan stated that it is important to find a balance regarding water needs of 25,000-30,000

people and habitat. Mr. Zimmer stated that, in his opinion, the relationship between the University and Town is greatly improved.

**5. Mansfield Downtown Partnership**

Mr. Callahan said the Fall Festival was a great event with good turnout. Mayor Paterson stated that the event was an example of great partnership efforts between the Town and University.

Mr. Callahan noted that the Storrs Center project received its last local permit. The only remaining permits/approvals needed are from DEP/Army Corps of Engineers and the State DOT for improvements to Route 195. Building 1A is the next big step. Spring 2008 is the tentative construction date for that building. Mayor Paterson noted that the Town is still working with State legislators regarding bonding issues for the downtown parking garages.

**6. Future Discussion/Presentation Topics**

Mr. Clouette inquired about the status of the Spring Weekend "white paper." Mayor Paterson said that it is not yet complete, but that Ms. Bell-Elkins and Kevin Grunwald are working on it. Once the report is final it will be distributed to this Committee.

**7. Other Business**

No other business discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maria E. Capriola  
Assistant to Town Manager